

## Message Text

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44

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

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P R 041321Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2408

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0809

EXDIS

DEPT PASS TO SECDEF; CINCPAC; CDR JCRC

D/PW FOR HENDERSON

GENEVA FOR SIEVERTS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CASC, LA

SUBJECT: AMCIT CHARLES M. DEAN

1. SECRETARY'S LETTERS TO PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA  
PHOUMLA AND FOREIGN MINISTER PHOUMI VONGVICHIT, AND THE  
DETAILED INFORMATION WE HAVE PROVIDED TO THE PATHET LAO  
APPEAR TO HAVE CONVINCED THE LAO LEADERSHIP OF THE  
SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THE U.S. VIEWS THE DEAN/ SHARMAN  
AFFAIR.

2. SOUVANNA HAD READ THE SECRETARY'S LETTERS BEFORE  
MRS. DEAN AND I SAW HIM THIS AFTERNOON AND HE WAS VERY  
FULSOME IN HIS EXPRESSIONS OF SYMPATHY AND CONCERN.  
HE TOLD MRS. DEAN THAT HE HAD REPEATEDLY DISCUSSED THE  
CASE WITH PRINCE SOUPHANOUVONG AND HAD REVIEWED IT  
WITH PHOUMI LAST WEEK-END. HE SAID HE WAS SURE THAT  
THE PATHET LAO WOULD DO THEIR UTMOST TO RETURN THE BOYS  
SAFE AND SOUND. COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORTATION  
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WERE DIFFICULT IN THE PL ZONE AND IT WAS NATURAL THAT

THERE SHOULD BE DELAYS. SOUPHANOUVONG WAS FULLY FAMILIAR WITH THE CASE AND WOULD PURSUE IT PERSONNALLY WHEN HE WENT TO SAM NEUA IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

3. SUBSEQUENT INTERVIEW WITH SOUPHANOUVONG WAS REMARKABLY CORDIAL. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD PERFECTLY THE CONCERN OF THE DEAN FAMILY AND THE USG OVER CHARLES DEAN. HE HAD BEEN FOLLOWING THE MATTER CLOSELY AND HAD SENT ORDERS TO SAM NEUA FOR AN INVESTIGATION TO BE CONDUCTED AND HAD SENT RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS TO THE AREA. THREE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS WER NOW INVOLVED AND ORDERS HAD BEEN GIVEN TO SEND TRANSPORTATION FOR THE BOYS. THE PATHET LAO HAD HAD TO STRIP THEIR CADRES IN THEIR ZONE IN ORDER TO STAFF VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG. THIS HAD RESULTED IN A BREAKDOWN IN RADIO COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THEIR ZONE. SOME OF THE OFFICERS WHO REMAINED WERE NOT VERY BRIGHT AND DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO DO. FURTHERMORE, THE ROADS WERE VERY BAD AFTER THE RAING SEASON AND SOME MOVEMENT HAD TO BE MADE ON FOOT. HE REGRETTED DEEPLY THE DELAYS THERE HAD BEEN IN GETTING INFORMATION.

4. SOUPHANOUVONG SAID HE WAS NOT SURE WHEN HE WOULD GO TO SAM NEUA BUT IT WOULD BE IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. HE ACCEPTED WITHOUT HESITATION A LETTER FOR CHARLES DEAN FROM HIS MOTHER AND OFFERED TO TAKE A PARCEL. HE SAID HE WOULD LET HER KNOW AT ONCE WHATEVER INFORMATION HE OBTAINED. WHEN ASKED HOW LONG MRS. DEAN SHOULD STAY IN LAOS, HE SUGGESTED SHE STAY UNTIL THE FIFTEENTH OF FEBRUARY.

5. SOUPHANOUVONG SAID THAT HE APPRECIATED THE EFFORTS MADE BY THE EMBASSY TO PROVDE INFORMATION WHICH MIGHT HELP RESOLVE THIS AFFAIR AND STATED THAT HE HOPED THE U.S. G. WOULD NOT MAKE THE CASE TOO QTE DRAMATIC UNQTE. THE LAO WISHED TO HAVE AS GOOD RELATIONS AS POSSIBLE WITH THE U.S.G. AND AN INCIDENT OF THIS KIND SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS INDICATING ILL-WILL OR LACK OF CONCERN ON THE PART OF HIS COLLEAGUES.  
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6. SOUPHANOUVONG IS A VOLUBLE CONCERSATIONALIST BUT THROUGHOUT THE FOREGOING, MRS. DEAN AND I GOT IN A FEW COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS EDGEWISE.

7. COMMENT. I AM ENCOURAGED BY THE TURN THIS AFFAIR HAS TAKEN AND PARTICULARLY BY SOUPHANOUVONG'S COMMENTS AND THE GENERAL TONE OF OUR MEETING. WHILE I

AM RELUCTANT TO RAISE THE HOPES OF THE DEAN FAMILY  
THAT THEIR ORDEAL MAY BE ALMOST AT AN END, I FOUND  
SOUPHANOUVONG'S SUGGESTION THAT MRS. DEAN STAY UNTIL  
ABOUT THE 15TH VERY SIGNIFICANT.

8. PLEASE PASS FOREGOING TO HOWARD DEAN.  
WHITEHOUSE

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECDEF, CINCPAC; CDR JCRC.

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NNN

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